



Iznik Tile

Ottoman Turkey, ca. 1575-85

Ceramic decorated with underglaze polychrome

25cm square

Provenance: European private collection

Stock no.: A5176

Of square form, this polychrome Iznik tile painted in underglaze technique would have originally been part of a frieze. The central trefoil motif is flanked by half trefoils on either side, all of which are outlined in thick bole-red with cobalt-blue and green decorations within forming smaller palmettes on the white background. The larger trefoil designs are linked together by a red lobed border from the bottom followed by blue and turquoise borders which are outlined in thin black outlines.

Most likely, this striking design was developed in the imperial workshops in the Ottoman capital city of İstanbul and then executed in the town of İznik, located in north-western Anatolia. The technique used to create the tile was complex and required multiple firings to ensure the highest level of clarity for both the colours and the design. Thus, İznik tiles similar to this piece were highly valued luxury objects which still continue to represent Ottoman visual culture at its height.

There is a range of İznik tiles in the *Çinili Köşk* ("Tiled Kiosk") in the Topkapı Palace in İstanbul, with trefoil bordures.¹ There are also two tiles in a similar style in the British Museum in London (Accession Numbers: 1895,0603.146 and 1895,0603.147). Another tile that is similar in style is in the Ömer Koç Collection.²

Footnotes:

1. See, Gönül Öney. 1975. *Turkish Ceramic Tile Art*. Tokyo: Heibonsha. Figs. 99-103 & p.179.

2. See, Bilgi, Hulya. The Ömer Koç İznik Collection. Istanbul, 2015. Fig. 7, p.41, pp. 168-171